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38. (newly added) The thin flange of claim 37, wherein at least one mounting feature comprises at least one threaded bore.

39. (newly added) The thin flange of claim 37, wherein at least one mounting feature comprises at least one groove formed on an inner surface of the thin flange.

In the Abstract:

Please replace the existing Abstract with the following

A system for coupling ultra-high vacuum components has a thin flange insertable between two standard thickness flanges having a circular bolt pattern. The thin flange minimizes the length that is added onto a vacuum system when a component is added. The thin flange has a first plurality of bolt holes aligned with the circular bolt hole pattern on the standard thickness flanges and a second plurality of bolt holes disposed inside the circular bolt hole pattern for mounting a variety of apparatus inside the vacuum system.

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding final Office Action mailed April 10, 2003. Upon entry of the foregoing amendments in this preliminary amendment, claims 16-39 are pending in the application. Claims 1-15 have been cancelled. The Applicant respectfully submits that the new claims add no new matter to the application.

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